

LEGISLATIVE COMMENT

By LEWIS H. MACHEN

REVIEW AND PROSPECT

The Liquor Referendum.

The most engrossing feature of the past week in legislative circles was the passage of the Jordan enabling act or prohibition referendum, by the House on Thursday by a vote of 6 to 39. As there were four pairs announced, the House actually stood 67 to 34, the majority being two votes less than two-thirds.

The debate on this measure, which began Tuesday morning, occupied the better part of the two sessions of the House held each day for three days. Naturally it was a spirited discussion and attracted the most crowded galleries of the winter. It is doubtful how, however, whether the measure changed any votes in the House. The majority for the bill was five or six votes larger than the vote forces had conceded, but there is reason to believe they were not surprised at the result.

The companion bill in the Senate is still before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of that body, which has granted the advocates of the measure a hearing to-night. The Jordan bill is now before the same committee, and it is likely that the patrons of the Senate measure will ask that their bill be passed by in committee and the Jordan measure substituted. The effort to instruct the committee Saturday to pass it by failed on a point of order. It is known that a majority of this committee is opposed to the referendum, but it is unlikely that it will attempt to keep the bill indefinitely in this committee. It is expected, on the contrary, that it will be unfavorably reported at an early date. This will not be conclusive of its fate, for it will be remembered that it was reported from the similar committee of the House with a recommendation against its passage. The latest estimate of the disposition of the Senators upon the bill gives twenty-two votes against and eighteen votes for it. It is said on good authority, however, that at least two of those counted against the bill may vote for it, making the vote a tie, to be decided by the Lieutenant-Governor.

Defect of Co-ordinate College.

The chief surprise of the week was the defeat by the Senate Thursday by a vote of 11 to 26 of the bill to establish a co-ordinate college for women at the University of Virginia. Senator Early and Ryan, the patrons of the bill, had made a careful poll of the Senate and had counted on at least twenty-five votes for the bill. The defeat of the Tucker amendment, providing that the institution should not be put within a mile of the university, is believed to have alienated four or five votes which the bill would otherwise have received.

The sentiment in the Senate, nevertheless, appears to favor a co-ordinate college for women, but so many of the influential members are opposed to its being put at the university that some of its earlier advocates have lost much of their enthusiasm for the proposition contained in the bill.

The friends of the measure announce that they will keep up the fight before the next General Assembly, and it may be that some of the Senators will change their minds in the meanwhile. Of course, the companion bill in the House will not be pushed, its fate there has always been doubtful, but until the vote was taken in the Senate it was regarded as certain that the latter body would pass it by a good majority.

The Primary Bill.

The Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, having had the Byrd-Featherston primary elections bill before it since the 26th of January, reported it to the Senate with some amendments and, on motion of Senator Holt, the chairman of the committee, it was set as a special and continuing order for to-morrow. It is expected that it will pass the Senate, probably with some of the amendments which the committee have recommended. This is regarded on all sides as the most important general legislation which this General Assembly will enact.

Woman and Child Labor.

The House of Delegates on Monday passed the Creamer bill to extend the operation of the present statute limiting the hours of labor of women to mercantile establishments and shops, and also the Byrd child labor bill, extending the provisions of the existing law on the subject so as to prohibit children under sixteen years of age from working at night and in messenger service and the like, and to prevent children under ten from selling newspapers.

Resubmitting Amendment.

The joint resolution which had passed the Senate and House of Delegates, resubmitting to the people the constitutional amendment allowing as transactors and commissioners of the revenue to be re-elected for more than two successive terms, was returned to the House of Delegates by the Governor with a message setting forth his opinion that it was not in the interest of the executive to approve or disapprove the action of the Legislature in submitting a constitutional amendment to the people. This settles definitely a question which has been much mooted in Virginia. Heretofore, such resolutions have been signed by the Governor, very much as a matter of course; but many lawyers have believed all along that in such matters the Legislature acted upon its own responsibility and that the Governor did not need to sign any could not veto such a resolution.

The opinion of the Attorney-General, which accompanied the Governor's message, is a strong document that seems to be conclusive in favor of the proposition.

Congressional Districts Intact.

After several futile efforts to secure a joint caucus of the Democrats of the Senate and the House on the question of changing the boundaries of the congressional districts, and the failure of the House to have a caucus of its own, there was a second effort to hold a caucus of the House Democrats, which succeeded. At this caucus it was decided to allow the districts to remain as they are at present. The House has passed the bill as decided upon by the House caucus, and the Senate may or may not do likewise.

Convict Labor.

The Senate on Friday passed the substitute for the Lester road bill, which made it unlawful for the State to employ convict labor to road work, as recommended by the Senate Committee on Roads and Internal Navigation, providing that the dangerous convicts not exceeding 500, may be leased by the directors of the penitentiary for a period of not more than five years. The House has also passed this bill and it is believed that it defeated the Creamer bill, which pro-

hibited the directors to hire out any of the convicts without the specific authority of the General Assembly. The bill which has been made to abolish the convict contract system has, to the extent stated, failed, though it is now recognized more plainly than ever that the system is doomed, and is even now in the process of ultimate extinction.

The Appropriation Bills.

The duplicate appropriation bills, the most voluminous and by many expected the most important measures to be considered by the General Assembly, having been prepared by the subcommittee of the Joint Finance Committees of the two houses and approved by the full committees, were reported to the Senate and House on Saturday and set as special orders for Wednesday. They appropriate about \$13,000,000 for the two fiscal years with which they deal.

It is supposed they will cause two or three days' debate in each house. On one occasion the House in one day went through the House in one day, under the able generalship of Colonel A. M. Bowman, but this example is not expected to be duplicated at the session. Some members with a passion for economy will try to cut down certain appropriations, and those having institutions located in their districts will endeavor to have appropriations for the same materially increased. Some of these movements will succeed, but in the main the recommendations of the committees will prevail. The bills coming from the two bodies will, of course, vary in some important particulars, and these differences will be fought out in conference. The final passage of the bill will be among the last acts of the Legislature.

Investigations.

A couple of weeks ago the House of Delegates adopted a joint resolution looking to the investigation of the Department of Public Instruction, which went to the Senate Committee on Public Institutions and Education. This committee invited those who had complaints to present their evidence, which the committee decided, did not make out a prima facie case. In this view the Senate concurred. Thereupon an effort was made to have the House hold an investigation of this department on its own account, but the House voted the resolution down. It is regarded on all sides that the Legislature has in this manner vindicated the Department of Public Instruction and exonerated the superintendent from the charges which have circulated against him.

The House has adopted a resolution looking to the appointment of a House committee to hold vacation investigations of various institutions of the State.

Line-Grinding Bill.

The bill to provide for two State line-grinding plants to supply the farmers with ground raw lime has been a special order in the House for some days, but was pushed aside temporarily by the prolonged discussion provoked by the Jordan bill. The attack upon the measure has been unusually vigorous and has postponed action upon it until today. The chances are that it will pass the House, but its prospects in the Senate are not especially bright. The Governor has taken strong ground in its favor and the agricultural interests generally are supporting it, but the fact that it marks a departure for the State to engage in work which has heretofore been left to private enterprise is making a number of Senators hesitate to declare for it. This late in the session it will be extremely difficult for any controversial matter coming from the House to get the requisite consideration in the Senate.

Tax Commission Bill.

The bill providing for a State Tax Commission, of which Speaker Byrd is the main advocate, is the special order immediately following the line-grinding bill in the House. The House Finance Committee has reported a substitute measure, which has already been discussed at some length in this column. It is certain to cause a great deal of discussion, which will be interrupted by the appropriation bill on Wednesday that moves upon having precedence of all others. It is possible that toward the close of the week it will be known whether the House will approve any Tax Commission measure. It is not improbable that the House will pass it in something like the form of the substitute, but the Senate is not likely to reach it this session. Counting out three days for the appropriation bill, there will be only nine working days of the session left, and many other matters are pressing for action. It is a great pity that both houses could not have agreed at the session that some plan to remedy the known and admitted inequalities now existing in the matter of assessments.

The Game Bill.

In the Senate the Moncure-Rutherford game bill is set for special order Tuesday, but the primary bill and the appropriation bill will have the effect of putting off its consideration till Friday. The Committee on Fish and Game of the Senate and that of General Laws of the House have proposed amendments which are considered as impairing the efficiency of the measure. However, it is hoped that these will be voted down and the bill enacted in its original form. It is impossible to tell what other matters will develop on the floor, and at this stage of the proceedings any considerable opposition is likely to prove fatal. There is strong support of the measure among the sportsmen of the State and some of the farming interests, and the conservation societies have exerted themselves in its behalf.

Miscellaneous.

The Senate on Friday passed the House bill forbidding the killing of robins. The amendment making it optional is counted the property of the supervisors was lost. The school children of the State and the Audubon Society, as well as the Farmers' Institute, are largely responsible for the passage of the bill.

The House Committee on Roads Monday indefinitely passed by Senator West's bill requiring the use of interchangeable mileage books. This means the death of the measure.

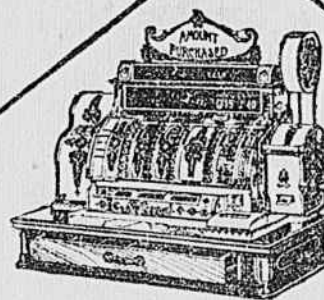
The House on Saturday passed a joint resolution looking to the revision of the Code. This is a matter which the present Legislature ought to attend to, but so far as the revising committee has been the revision which the plan has gone to work and such may be the result again.

The House has passed a bill of Delegate White to the effect that a steam railway company failing to obey a statute passed by the Legislature for the employment cannot conclusively plead contributory negligence of an employee injured by such default, but the bill will probably not pass.

The Senate on Thursday passed the bill providing for burial permits and certificates of birth and death, and the establishment of a permanent office of records in the Capitol in Richmond. It is believed the House will pass it also.

The Senate refused to take up Senator West's anti-fire system bill from the committee on Thursday, and it is doubtful if it can be passed at this session.

The House on Saturday refused to invite Hon. Champ Clark to address the Legislature, doubtless feeling that Governor Woodrow Wilson and Governor Harman will have pretty well covered the ground.



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CITY NOT TO BUY WATERLESS DOCK

Finance Committee Will Again Consider Question of Purchase To-Night.

Following the called meeting of the Council, the Committee on Finance will hold a special meeting to-night to take up the question of acquisition of the old Richmond Dock and other matters and the conservation societies have exerted themselves in its behalf.

Something of a hitch was developed in the dock negotiations. The property east of Seventeenth Street has been offered to the city for \$90,000, but it develops that this offer contemplates a mere real estate transaction, and does not carry with it any guarantee of water supply or that the canal and basin above will be maintained so as to make the dock available for the uses for which it is intended. Some members of the committee favor rejection of the offer and the institution of condemnation proceedings for acquisition of the dock east of Fourteenth Street, together with all water rights, including contracts for water power, furnishing, and the establishment of a permanent office of records in the Capitol in Richmond. It is believed the House will pass it also.

The Finance Committee has no intention of being caught napping, and pur-

chasing a dock property into which no water flows.

Another matter of interest to come before the Finance Committee to-night is the plans for the new Richmond School, to be erected on the recently acquired Van Lee property, at Twenty-fourth and Grace Streets. While the lowest bid submitted on the building is \$35,000, it is apparently coming within the estimate. It develops that this does not include the heating and ventilating, the architect's fees, and other costs which bring the total, if the building is erected along the present lines, to \$122,000, which some members of the committee hold to be excessive. It may be that the plans will be turned back to the architects, Carneal & Johnson, for revision. Members of the committee argue that the section is already entirely built up, and that its population will not increase, and that to erect so large a building at this point will result in diverting attention from the districts served by East End and Chalmers Schools, especially as it is planned shortly to replace East End School with a larger and more modern building, that being located in a section in which more population may be reasonably expected.

Bill With Tomato Can.

Lilly Hubbard, colored, of 413 1-2 North Fifteenth Street, was badly cut about the face yesterday when she was struck by a can of tomatoes thrown by Frederick Bagby, colored. Bagby is well known to the police, and was only released from jail several days ago, where he was confined as a result of a warrant sworn out by the woman he attacked. It is believed that the assault was brought about through a motive of revenge. The police are looking for Bagby.

POLICE WILL URGE WHOLESALE CUT

Want Number of Pawnshops Reduced From Eleven to Three. With Restrictions.

At a special meeting of the Committee on Ordinance, Charter and Reform called for Thursday night a public hearing will be had on the pending ordinance recommended by the Board of Police Commissioners reducing the number of pawnshops to three, and placing certain restrictions upon the conduct of their business. The directory lists eleven such establishments in the city at present. The Police Department recommends that such institutions are largely used for disposal of stolen goods, and that the less the number the more readily they can be watched and such articles recovered. Representatives of the Police Department will be heard in support of the ordinance, and several of the pawnbrokers have also asked to be heard, not only in regard to the limitation to be placed on the number, but in regard to the license to be charged.

A number of salary increase ordinances are to be considered at this meeting, including the following: Chief clerk Water Department to \$1,500 per annum; inspector of gas to \$1,500; chief clerk City Engineer's Department to \$1,700 per annum; increasing the

city's portion of the pay of the judges of the various City Hall courts so as to make, with that allowed by the State, \$5,000 each in lieu of \$4,500; captain City Tug increase to \$1,500 per annum.

An ordinance is also pending to fix the pay of the members of the Administrative Board, which takes effect January 1 next, at \$2,000 each. The charter provisions specify that the five members shall receive not less than \$1,000 each.

Ordinances are also pending or on the table to prohibit the admission of minors under fourteen years of age to moving picture theatres unless accompanied by parents or guardians; increasing the number of saloon licenses to 121 to allow a license for a proposed new hotel; providing a one-hour day for employees of the Street Cleaning Department; prohibiting dogs, whether licensed or unlicensed, from going at large in any park in which squirrels are kept; making it unlawful for any person under sixteen years of age to drive any public hack, cart, dray or wagon on the city streets; granting permission to C. E. Bowden to erect a brick stable on Grace between Ninth and Tenth Streets; granting permission to S. H. Cottrell to erect a brick stable on Marshall, between Hancock and Harrison Streets; to allow the City Home staff to associate six specialists in the practice in the City Home Hospital; and to provide for appointment of a day and night clerk at the City Home Superintendent's office.

MR. BROOKS'S TALK ON THE CALIFORNIA CAMPAIGN

The address of John Graham Brooks to members of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia brought together

in league headquarters, 800 East Broad Street, Saturday afternoon not only suffragists, but many desiring to listen to what Mr. Brooks had to say, especially regarding the recent California suffrage campaign and the Los Angeles election.

Probably there are not few men who can convey as much meaning as Mr. Brooks can in an address that seemed so short as to cause his hearers to wish it were longer. He explained the conditions that preceded man's movement. He said that there had been a great awakening of the people on the Pacific slope, and that what came afterward was the popular protest put into action. He said that women were doing politics in California, giving an object lesson to the rest of the world, and so they were admitted to what the character of the effect that the character of the men chosen for office was higher, that the polls had been rendered altogether safe and clean, and that social standards had been raised. And that, said Mr. Brooks, counts for a great deal. He said that the suffrage in California had been won, not by the women in cities, but by those in rural districts and on big ranches, which they managed with the utmost skill and success, using the latest and most scientific methods. Mrs. Brooks, who was in the audience, declined an invitation to speak. Her husband received a rising vote of thanks for his most illuminating and clear-cut talk. A large number of Richmond men were present.